

necessary.” These methods included the use of intimidation—WGU club members would “announce on all occasions that they would succeed if they had to shoot every negro in the city.” To facilitate their goal, all members were armed and paraded the streets, day and night. Dowling reported that the red shirts worn by him and his men were provided by the county Democratic Party. Dowling, captain of the Rough Riders, provided his men with whiskey during parades to “fire them up, and make them fiercer and more terrorizing in their conduct.” Even after Mayor Silas Wright ordered the closure of saloons, Dowling claimed that congressional candidate John D. Bellamy Jr. “distributed the whiskey from his office.”<sup>39</sup>

Activities in Wilmington again mirrored the statewide campaign with the growth of a Red Shirt contingent towards the end of the campaign. According to several of Wilmington’s Populists and Republicans, the Red Shirts provided a frightful, dangerous incentive to remain quiet and at home in the weeks prior to the election.<sup>40</sup> In Wilmington, a large Red Shirt rally was held on November 3 in which participants wearing their regalia marched or rode horses throughout town led by Chief Marshal Roger Moore and his aides. The leader of the “Fifth Ward Rough Riders” in

the parade was G. W. Bornemann. Another leader of the Red Shirts/Rough Riders was Mike Dowling. The parade began downtown and, after a procession through traditionally black neighborhoods, particularly Brooklyn, ended at Hilton Park where there were a number of speakers and a large picnic.<sup>41</sup> Although contemporary newspaper accounts pointed to the peaceful conduct of the rally, just one day later the Rough Riders got out of hand. “Condemned by all true and good citizens,” the Rough Riders spilled into South Front Street and jeopardized all of the careful planning initiated by the Democrats as they attacked “inoffensive persons” and “ran amuck” on the streets. The next day, November 5, the newspaper reprimanded the men and explained that “in their wild rowdyism, they represented nothing but themselves” and nearly “invited riot.”<sup>42</sup> Chief of Police John

<sup>39</sup>The information from Dowling regarding his activity in the Red Shirt/Rough Rider brigade as well as in the WGU was obtained by Republican Oliver Dockery, Bellamy’s opponent in the 1898 election. Dockery challenged the validity of Bellamy’s election and subpoenaed Dowling’s testimony. Dowling was rewarded with a city job after the violence but, by 1900, had several run-ins with Wilmington leaders after the 1898 campaign and had no compulsion to protect them while giving testimony in 1900. Winston-Salem *Union-Republican*, March 15, 1900.

<sup>40</sup>L. H. Bryant testified in 1899 that he was a Populist and that armed men, carpenters from the railroad, visited his home and told him not to vote. *Contested Election Case*, 394-5.

<sup>41</sup>It is unknown how many men participated in the rally. The *Dispatch* claimed 100 Red Shirts were in the parade and that over 1,000 people gathered at Hilton Park. Henry L. Hewett testified that he rode in the procession but would not estimate the number of participants. Chief of Police John Melton also testified that on the day of the Red Shirt parade there was sporadic shooting into homes, particularly that of Dixon Toomer, and into a black school on Campbell Square. Melton identified Theodore Swann as the leader of the Rough Riders. *Evening Dispatch* (Wilmington), November 3, 1898; *Contested Election Case*, 219, 360-387.

<sup>42</sup>Jim Worth wrote to his wife: “We had a little row last night about dark that might have brought on something worse. Some of the Fifth Ward “Rough Riders” on a spree ran foul of some darkies downtown early in the evening and maltreated several. The boys were “run in” by the police a little later and were today fined \$25.00 each and the costs. Rather expensive “fun” for that class of boys. Down on Front Street about dark last night they tackled every nigger that came along regardless and ran several across the street and into nearby alleys. Fortunately they had no arms or there might have been serious trouble as a crowd of both colors quickly formed; but very little was done except to make the boys move on.” Jim Worth to Josephine, November 4, 1898, James S. Worth Papers, Southern